

**MINUTES  
DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET HEARINGS  
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING  
ROOM 113  
THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2002  
1:00 P.M.**

Commissioners Present: Bob Workman, Chair  
Bernie Heier, Vice Chair  
Kathy Campbell  
Larry Hudkins  
Ray Stevens

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer  
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer  
Dave Kroeker, Budget and Fiscal Officer  
Amy Prenda, Director of Legal Research and Analysis for  
Kissel/E&S Associates  
Melissa Koci, County Clerk's Office

The Chair opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

**VISITORS PROMOTION** (019)

Present were Mark Essman, Director, Sandi Witkowicz, Marketing and Communication Coordinator, Wendy Birdsall and Gary Powell.

Essman indicated his budget reflects a 6.6% increase.

Powell said there is an increase in Event Promotion because of the National Roller Skating, Girls Volleyball and State Football coming to town with the National Roller Skating being their largest single event.

Powell said last year they had a 31% increase on insurance and this year with some personnel changes they went from single coverage to family coverage.

Campbell questioned the rent.

Powell said in 1997 a lease was entered into and the CAM charges were capped the first four years and beginning in 2002 the charge will be an estimated cost of \$2.40 extra per square foot.

Essman indicated the square footage average is a little under \$15 a square foot and office space downtown usually runs anywhere from \$12.50 to \$18.00 per square foot. He said the increase of \$2.40 is included in the \$14.93.

Stevens said he calculated the increase in their budget at 8.56%.

Powell said it is 8.6% over budget, but 6.6% over actual. He said there were two position changes and they had to override the salaries. They also had some additional travel and training for the new salesperson who went to New York.

Essman said there was only \$100,000 budgeted this year for Event Promotion, but the estimated actual costs will be \$136,000 because of the Hot Rod Power Tour, Cattleman's Ball and National Roller Skating event which was unanticipated.

Workman thought there was money in the contingency fund that may be able to cover the costs.

Kroeker said the County hasn't paid for any events for the Visitors Promotion for a long time and he believed there is \$50,000 in a reserve in the contingency fund.

Essman also said there was one thing not built into the budget and is something that will need to be discussed with the Board down the road. They are in need of an upgrade of their software system to be responsive to some of the types of inquiries that some of the hotels are asking them to track. He said the cost is at least \$20,000 for the software, which would eventually pay for itself in a very short amount of time with the amount of manpower it will eliminate. Right now everyone is responsible for their own individual correspondence and this would be a customized system.

Campbell asked Eagan if contingency money can be spent on software.

Eagan believed so.

### **RELIEF/MEDICAL** (801)

Susan Klein, Department of Social Services, said the general assistance payments are paid at the Medicaid rate and she believes it may be a little over a half of what the actual facility bills.

Kroeker said the other item that has really grown is pharmacy expenses and part of the reason is because there is not a generic to psychotropic drugs, which are highly used.

Campbell questioned the Social Services contracts doubling and wondered if the fee was going to double.

Klein said she does not know yet.

Workman asked what regulates the amount that is spent.

Klein said her administration follows the General Assistance Plan, which is written and approved by the County Board and then eligibility is determined based on the plan. She said if they are eligible for General Assistance, Social Services has to provide for it unless there is no more money, but Social Services is a last resort for funds.

Campbell said the General Assistance Monitoring Committee is the one that monitors the plan and meets with the Health Department, Mental Health and other Departments and the criteria could be changed.

Kroeker said Dean Settle sent the County Board a letter stating he has \$40,000 of billing that he would like to charge to General Assistance because he's out of money. Kroeker said Klein indicated she is getting more referrals from Mental Health for assisted living than what they used to.

Kroeker also wondered if Pat Lopez, Health Department Nursing Supervisor, could take over the medical costs and if the Veteran's Service could pay for burials.

Hudkins asked about line item 3604 regarding rent and asked about the parking.

Klein said there are some State cars that are used primarily by the Protective Services staff that use the parking lot, but employees have to pay for their own parking.

Hudkins asked if the building is being kept up because he received a report that one of the employees was continually asking for her office to be painted and since it didn't get done, she ended up painting it herself.

Klein said that was true.

Hudkins said the building should be looked at since a lot of people visit that office and the County is paying \$13.21 a square foot. He said there are other offices downtown that are paying less a square foot and are in top condition.

Kroeker said the rent has gone up 4.5% a year, the lease runs out March 31, 2003 and maybe the lease should be looked at.

Klein also indicated the client rent has almost doubled. Klein indicated the guidelines need to be looked at again and the third tier of eligibility can be eliminated, which means they would be making fewer applications because some of them would be screened out.

### **LANCASTER MANOR** (061)

Larry Van Hunnik, Administrator, appeared and submitted documentation regarding his proposed budget (Exhibit A) and indicated his budget is up \$15 million, however, salary and benefits make up 76% of his budget.

Van Hunnik said in the Renewal & Replacement Fund, Items 4210-4219, would not need to be purchased next year, which would save approximately \$30,000. He also said there is a big increase in group insurance with an increase of \$327,315 over the previous year. They are still self-insuring for liability insurance, so he has \$75,000 budgeted there.

Van Hunnik said he has budgeted for 90% of the occupancy at 263 residents and 251 of those residents are Medicaid recipients.

Van Hunnik said under Contracted Services the maintenance agreement for Lintel Systems did not go through yet but eventually will have to be paid for. Hunnik also noted under line item 3091, Temporary Services, he has budgeted a considerable reduction to \$750,000, which is about \$62,000 a month. He said last year \$203,000 was spent during the month of May and this last May it was only \$47,000 and that is because the job vacancies are being filled.

Hudkins asked about the shop in the basement of Lancaster Manor and the storage space he may have available.

Van Hunnik said the only storage inside the building is taken up by some of the resident's storage. Regulation says that a person must have a certain square footage of storage per resident available if needed. He also said he has a couple of storage sheds outside.

Hudkins asked if the shop should be relocated. He said the new Juvenile Detention Facility is in need of a shop and wondered if maybe there would be a central location for both facilities or if one needs to be built for the Juvenile Detention Facility.

Van Hunnik indicated he would like things left the way they are.

Hudkins noted he has not received one call or complaint about Lancaster Manor this last year.

### **EXTENSION OFFICE** (645)

Gary Bergman, Unit Leader, and Kay Coffey, Administrative Aide, appeared and distributed documentation regarding the Extension Office budget (Exhibit B).

Hudkins asked about the 1/2 person reduction on FTE's.

Bergman said the employee was grant funded and had been with the Extension Office since 1994 for the Clean Lakes Project and now the project had ended.

Bergman also indicated at one time \$20,000 of his salary was provided by Lancaster County and the rest was paid by the University of Nebraska, now everything is paid for by the County.

Campbell asked if the Extension Office suffered any cuts from the University.

Bergman said his office has not received any cuts directly, but the Special Session had not been called yet.

Bergman distributed documentation regarding his budget reduction plan (Exhibit C) and said there is usually an upgrade that is done on all of his computers every year which could be reduced or taken out of the budget. He also noted they could reduce the purchase of computer software and repairs, but would eventually come back to the Board if it is needed.

Campbell asked about the increase in client services.

Bergman said that includes the staff that is funded by the Bio Solids Project, the Future Farmer's Program and other programs.

Campbell asked what the University is paying for Health care and asked Bergman to report the figures back to the Board.

Hudkins asked the number of youth that are being served by the 4-H Program or Outreach Program.

Bergman said around 27,000 this past year.

### **INFORMATION SERVICES** (610)

Doug Thomas, Manager, appeared and said there could be a \$10,000 reduction in the Joint City-County Information Service Project, which tracks the Personnel applications.

Thomas said County Court should be consulted to determine exactly what they need. Some of their equipment isn't used regularly and he doesn't want to upgrade computers that aren't being used. He said there are three Pentium 100's, which are old machines, one was signed on once in 2000, one was signed on in 2001 and that was the last time they were signed on.

Thomas also indicated the District Court is requesting \$29,019 from the microcomputer fund to replace 18 computers & 17" monitors. He said 7 of the 18 requested aren't used on a regular basis and their slowest machine is a Pentium 350. Everything else in the entire office is faster than that and he believed that item could be reduced.

Thomas reported the Public Defender is requesting another upgrade along with 11 computers and 13 monitors. Thomas said with 7 new PC's and 8 monitors, everyone in the office would have a Pentium 733 with a 17" monitor or better and most of them are 1.5 gig machines.

Thomas also noted the Adult Probation office is asking for 3 PC's and 2 monitors and their worst computer right now is a Pentium 343.

Eagan asked about the Anti-Virus software and the occasional messages that don't have any information on the screen.

Thomas said it is because the firewall has intercepted a virus, pulled it out of the message and forwarded the subject information.

Eagan said maybe a notice should be written to people making them aware of the virus that is out there.

Thomas said he could print something in their Quarterly Newsletter.

Kroeker indicated the County Assessor said they will be \$50,000 short.

Thomas indicated every time the enter key was hit there was a charge and every time a job was submitted to run there was a charge. He said they still project based on a 4-year historical use and bill the following year for CPU usage. Thomas said the Assessor will not need \$50,000 extra because he will not be billed any extra for usage on the IBM or the CJIS System.

Thomas distributed documentation regarding a Historical Information Services Budget for the prior five years (Exhibit E) and indicated his budget has only gone up .07% over the past five years and next years budget is actually 2.32% less than the current year. He said he has seen a significant change in his budget compared to five years ago when health care was affordable, it only covered 56% of the budget and now is over 70%. Thomas indicated they have reduced FTE's by two and they used to support 1,280 computers and are now supporting 2,120.

Thomas also said in 98-99 there were 7,447,170 total web hits and the first six months of the current year there are 21,074,839 total web hits.

### **AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY** (045)

Charles Willnerd, President, and Jim Countryman, Treasurer, appeared and distributed documentation regarding the General/Fair budget (Exhibit F).

Countryman said most of the income expense happens in the second six months because the Fair is being held so he has to look at the previous years expenses to base the budget on.

Willnerd said the contracts with judges and superintendents include cost guidelines and if they have to go outside those guidelines they have to get approval from the Agricultural Society first. Willnerd believed there will be greater participation at the Fair since they are at a separate site.

Workman asked if the numbers are up against the operating lid.

Willnerd said yes and they won't have the final figures for a couple of months.

Workman asked if the Event Center staff was underpaid.

Willnerd said last year they were probably underpaid and indicated they are going to have to bring in outside funds and sponsorships to put the Fair on because the budget revenues are growing smaller and smaller compared to the total expense of the Fair.

Willnerd also reported the new Event Center Director, Wayne Venter, is doing an excellent job, is watching expenses and some of the supervisor's have improved their performance. He said they are going to be working on cleanliness, landscaping and will be putting up an outdoor sign.

Stevens asked about the audit and the answers to the questions the Auditor's needed.

Countryman said the Ag Society would have the answers when they meet with them on Monday.

Willnerd said starting December 1, 2002 there will be three accounting files, one will be the general tax levy for the County Fair, one will be the capital account and one will be the Event Center.

Kroeker said at some point the allocation of the \$.15 needs to be discussed.

#### **LIBRARY** (020)

Carol Connor, Library Director, and John Dale, Assistant Director, appeared and distributed documentation regarding the funding for the contract for Library Services 2002-2003 (Exhibit G).

Connor said the request for funding for the contract is \$582,262 and the services provided through the contract are: access to all the services and collections at Bennett Martin Public Library, Anderson, Arnold Heights, Bethany, Eiseley, Gere, South and Walt branch libraries, Home Outreach by Mail, biweekly bookmobile service and the summer reading programs. She also indicated the Summer Reading County Outreach program has reached 1,082 children.

Connor also said library card registration of residents living outside Lincoln but within Lancaster County, is 10,982 which represents 6.7% of registered borrowers as of May 31, 2002.

Connor reported the amount requested of the property tax is 9.87%, which is based on the population figure of 24,710 for Lancaster County.

Connor also noted that they spoke with the City of Waverly regarding opening up their own library in the city and they discussed talking about the same issue with the City of Hickman.

Connor noted the Mayor's budget for the Library will have some reductions of service, which will include the Bennett Martin Public Library opening at 10:00 a.m. instead of 9 a.m. and the South Branch Library will have the same hours as Bethany, from a 64-hour week to a 48-hour week.

Dale indicated Library Services hasn't gotten the word out about the online services they provide, which needs to be done.

Kroeker wondered if Hickman and Waverly started their own libraries if they would be excluded from the library budget or would still be taxed.

Connor said there is an agreement between the Omaha Public Library and the smaller libraries in Douglas County and each library gets a certain amount of money.

After a brief discussion of Sheriff's vehicles, a motion was made.

**MOTION:** Moved by Hudkins and seconded by Campbell to authorize the County Sheriff to purchase six vehicles. On call Hudkins, Heier, Stevens, Campbell and Workman voted aye. Motion carried.

### **JUVENILE COURT** (623)

Present was Judge Dawson and Judge Porter, Juvenile Court Judges.

Dawson indicated the greatest issues that have had the most impact on his budget are Legal Services and Boarding Contracts. He said they would probably spend under what was allocated this year because the Office of Juvenile Services has taken the commitments and is paying for them, whereas the County used to pay for them.

Kroeker said \$168,000 has been recorded for Boarding contracts for the first ten months.

Dawson said they have come to realize that if they don't do what they need to do when they get the kids as a Group Home Placement then they will return and it will cost a lot more money. He said now there are kids going into Group Homes, leaving the Group Homes and going home with services in place, which keeps them from re-offending or coming back into the system.

Dawson also said they are now going to identify youth who have qualified as Medicare eligible and those kids will not be recommended to commit to the OJS, but will be handled with probation because the funding for payment of their services such as drug and alcohol treatment or group home would be covered by Medicare.

Dawson indicated they have no control over Legal Services and are receiving 2,000 cases a year and the cases are not decreasing.

Dawson said the Judges have made an effort to get the JUSTICE software put into use in the Juvenile Court and have met several times with the District Court to discuss it. He said once the new software is in place, the CARAT program can be done away with and there may be some cost in converting the CARAT's over into the JUSTICE system but he does not know what that would be.

Judge Thorson arrived.

Kroeker said the Data Processing costs in the Juvenile Court budget is to start allocating the cost of all the PC's, which had never been done before.

Heier asked about the maintenance contract.

Dawson said the maintenance contract is for the media sound equipment in the Courts.

Campbell asked if it was for the media centers that are in all the Courts and if so, maybe they should talk to all the Courts and ask how it is working, find out who's supposed to be running it and maybe talk with Don Killeen to see if it should be handled through Property Management.

Dawson believed the contract had to do with the sound equipment, the overhead voice amplification system and the system that goes into the Court Reporter. He said he would get Kroeker a copy of the agreement. Dawson said if the system goes down they wouldn't be able to operate because they are Courts of record and they need to be able to pick it up and to date, they haven't had any problems.

Dawson also noted he is very happy with the new Juvenile Detention Facility, School Program and the Assessment Center.

Dawson reported the services provided through Cory Steele permit the Judges to allow youth to be released from the Detention Facility and be placed in the community with evening reporting or day reporting.

Kroeker wondered where Cory Steele was going to be placed in the budget.

Porter said she spoke with Dennis Keefe, Public Defender, on the issue of the contracts and Legal Services and she believes they have run out of contract money before they anticipated. She suggested adding another contract because with abuse and neglect cases there are 4 or 5 attorney's on each case and the smaller the pool they have to deal with, the harder it is to get those cases heard in the time they have.

Hudkins asked about the service the Judges were receiving from the Clerk of the District Court.

Dawson said the problem is one very good person was assigned to handle the mental health cases and that person was to be committed 100%, then someone gets sick and she gets taken off of her job and then they are right back to where they started. He said Lancaster County is doing the same number of cases as Omaha, who has five clerk's doing what one Deputy does here, and it cannot be done. Dawson said the mental health desk is very understaffed and the clerk who is handling the whole job is overwhelmed. He said that position may become vacant if the Deputy doesn't get some help.

The Board agreed to put Cory Steele in F<sup>3</sup>'s budget.

**MOTION:** Stevens moved and Hudkins seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:02 p.m. On call Campbell, Stevens, Hudkins and Workman voted aye. Motion carried.

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Bruce Medcalf  
County Clerk